

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

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TAGS: EAIR, IT

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - GROUND SERVICES AT ROME AIRPORT

REF: ROME 6038 AND PREVIOUS

1. EMBOFF AND LOCAL PAA AND TAW REPS WERE INVITED TO MAY 20 MEETING AT OFFICES ROME AIRPORTS AUTHORITY (SAR), WHERE ENTIRE COMPLEX OF GROUND SERVICES PROBLEMS WERE DISCUSSED WITH SAR MANAGING DIRECTOR POSTIGLIONE AND OTHER SENIOR SAR REPS.

2. SAR ANNOUNCED AT MEETING THAT, DURING EXTENDED MAY 19 SESSION OF ALL INTERESTED ITALIAN PARTIES, DECISION WAS REACHED TO PERMIT PAA AND TAW TO RETAIN TICKET BOOTHS AT FIUMICINO AIRPORT. UNIONS WERE OPPOSED, FEARING USE OF TICKET BOOTHS AS CHECK-IN COUNTERS DURING STRIKES, BUT BOTH CIVILAVIA AND ALITALIA SUPPORTED THEIR CONTINUED OPERATION. CIVILAVIA ARGUED THAT ARTICLES 9 AND 10 OF BILATERAL AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT GIVE US CARRIERS RIGHT TO SELL TICKETS FREELY IN ITALY, INCLUDING FROM TICKET BOOTHS AT FIUMICINO. ALITALIA'S SUPPORT BASED ON FEAR OF POSSIBLE RETALIATORY ACTION IN US SHOULD TICKET BOOTHS AT FIUMICINO BE CLOSED. (EMBOFF HAD EMPHASIZED NATURE OF US LEGISLATION DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE EFFECTIVE RECIPROCITY IN CIVAIR RELATIONS TO ALITALIA REP CENCIARELLI, DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS DIVISION, ON FRIDAY.)

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MFA EXTREMELY IMPRESSED WITH NOTE DELIVERED IN WASHINGTON BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ENDERS TO AMBASSADOR ORTONA AND

ORAL REMARKS MADE AT THAT TIME.

3. SAR ALSO MADE CLEAR AT MAY 20 MEETING THAT, DUE ITALIAN POLITICAL/LABOR SITUATION, THERE IS NO RPT NO CHANCE THAT US CARRIERS MIGHT BE PERMITTED TO OBTAIN IN-FLIGHT CATERING SERVICES FROM OFF-AIRPORT VENDOR. SAR CONCESSIONAIRE SEARN--SUCCESSOR TO SO.GE.ME. AND OWNED 65 PERCENT BY ALITALIA--WILL HAVE COMPLETE MONOPOLY OF ALL IN-FLIGHT CATERING AT FIUMICINO.

4. FOR SOME REASONS, GOI NOT RPT NOT PREPARED GRANT ANY CARRIER RIGHT TO RESUME PROVIDING OWN GROUND SERVICES SHOULD SAR-PROVIDED SERVICES PROVE INADEQUATE OR TOO COSTLY. SAR PLANS TAKE OVER ALITALIA GROUND SERVICES AS SOON AS CONDITIONS PERMIT. POSTIGLIONE EMPHASIZED THAT LAW 755 (WHICH ESTABLISHED SAR) APPLIES TO ALITALIA AS WELL AS FOREIGN CARRIERS.

5. BOTH PAA AND TWA REPS APPEAR SATISFIED WITH DEVELOPMENTS, HAVING WON "BATTLE OF THE TICKET BOOTHS". BOTH US CARRIERS DESIRE TO TURN OVER THEIR PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES TO SAR ASAP.

6. DURING DISCUSSION OF SAR TAKEOVER OF PAA/TWA PHYSICAL ASSETS AT FIUMICINO, EMBOFF REMINDED SAR THAT USG WILL EXPECT PROMPT, ADEQUATE AND EFFECTIVE COMPENSATION FOR SUCH TAKEOVER IN ACCORDANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW. POSTIGLIONE SAID HE COULD FORESEE NO RPT NO POSSIBLE PROBLEMS IN THIS AREA.

7. COMMENT. EMBASSY NOTES THAT HINT OF POSSIBLE RETALIATORY ACTION AGAINST ALITALIA WAS KEY FACTOR IN GOI DECISION TO PERMIT PAA AND TAW TO RETAIN TICKET BOOTHS AT FIUMICINO.
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